

highlighted long-standing issues where the Australia defence matters are concerned. Certainly there is an indifference to this subject when compared with topics such as education, uranium mining, health insurance or whatever.

However, whether there is a total lack of public concern for national defence is a moot point. Engage the average Australian in a conversation about defence and he generally sees the need for an efficient defence structure. He also generally makes a wry joke or two about outdated military equipment! The Tiger Moth-DC3 syndrome.

Is it any wonder these attitudes prevail when, as your editorial states, "... it has to be said that the present Government has increasingly sought to avoid some of its crucial defence responsibilities." Just like so many preceding Governments, of course. Thereby creating a virtual tradition of Government vacillation and lack of long-term responsibility regarding defence.

Approved For Release 2007/06/20 : CIA-RDP99-00498R000100150039-6

defence, diluting expressed commitment. last week) the public might be excused for shrugging the matter off, for burying its head in the sand.

Certainly there is no "identifiable threat" to this country at present. One hopes this situation will prevail indefinitely. However, there must be one factor visible in even a modest defence posture such as ours. We must be seen to be able to protect our national interests. This is unlikely to be the case, though, when it is obvious to even drug runners and fishermen that we cannot effectively patrol our own coastline.

If this situation has arisen out of apathy, public and political, I hope that the nation does not reap a bad harvest it is currently sowing.

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November 27

Indifference

SIR, Australian Federal Governments and the community in general, with few exceptions, have habitually shown indifference to defence matters.

It would have been expected that the events of the 1930s and early

apparently not seem to be understood. It does not seem to be understood in virtue of the steadily deteriorating global situation, could be drawn into a major conflict without actually being threatened with invasion.

In this very unstable world a highly efficient and constantly updated defence establishment should be Australia's top priority and not one of its last as it now appears to be.

The constant reiteration that defence expenditure must be kept down in Australia's current economic climate is really nonsense. Colossal sums are swallowed up annually in gambling and professional sporting activities — not to mention the heavy drain on Australia's foreign exchange reserves occasioned by payments for luxury imports.

As long as Australia remains unprepared for war it will be indulging in a deadly game of chance, namely, gambling that the length of time between the perception of any major threat to world peace and its actuality will prove sufficient for the nation to achieve a state of preparedness.

In view of the lead time required in the purchasing of modern arms and equipment and the time taken to train combat personnel effectively in this extremely scientific and technological age the current policy of drift and inaction could well prove to be suicidal.

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November 28

STAT

Director steers CIA into calmer waters

29 Nov 78

STAT

But admiral is enigma

WASHINGTON. — Like the warships he used to command, Admiral Stansfield Turner has come through an arduous shakedown cruise, in his case as the Carter Administration's Director of Central Intelligence.

It is too early to suggest that he has returned safely to port, but his ability to stay afloat is no small accomplishment.

When he was appointed 17 months ago to head the CIA, the former naval officer found himself with a troubled organisation. Public confidence had been shaken by revelations of illegal activities at home, "dirty tricks" abroad, while petty bureaucratic jealousies that had been allowed to fester for

years undermined the agency's effectiveness.

Admiral Turner talks confidently, as he did in an interview last week, about how under him the agency is on its way to winning back respect. His manner was characteristically blunt, but given recent events it may be hard to understand the self-assurance.

Dismissal

The agency has come under attack, especially from White House assistants who maintain that it should have predicted the turmoil that has swept Iran, and who complain that they still do not have adequate information on the Moslem fundamentalists who are challenging the power of Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlavi.

Less crucial, perhaps, but still distracting, is the way Admiral Turner has been embroiled in disputes involving former agency employees.

One that could affect the agency's future dealings with former workers was the suit against Frank W. Snepp, whose book "Decent Interval" chronicled CIA bungling in the United States' evacuation of South Vietnam three years ago.

Last week, William Kampiles, a former agency clerk, was found guilty of selling the Russians a manual on the KH11 reconnaissance satellite. An expert on strategic arms, David Sullivan, was dismissed after he was suspected of passing secrets to an aide to Senator Henry Jackson, of

Washington, a hardliner on negotiations for a new arms treaty with the Soviet Union.

These difficulties followed even rougher going in Turner's first few months, when it seemed that every step he took made matters worse.

Morale, already battered, hit rock-bottom after he decided to dismiss 600 employees, many of them espionage operatives and senior staff members.

Normally secretive agency officials suddenly began complaining to news reporters about the admiral's "aloofness," his style of management, which seemed cut-throat to them, and his apparent preference of the advice of former naval aides.

Other senior foreign policy officials were antagonised by

Admiral Turner's eagerness to grab control of the Pentagon's intelligence services and by what some described as his desire to influence policy on such sensitive issues as the withdrawal of US forces from South Korea.

Morale higher

His obvious ambition and his close contact with President Carter, a former classmate at Annapolis, whom he sees at least once a week, even produced suggestions, both in and out of government that a controversial agency study on the world oil production had been tailored to support White House energy policies.

For all the complaints, though, there are reasons to believe that the worst is over for both Admiral Turner and his agency. Morale at the headquarters in Langley, Virginia, seems to have improved. — AAP.